

**Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of School Facilities**

BULLETIN

PHASING FOR PLAN REVIEW SUBMISSIONS

To All Stakeholders:

We are trying to limit phasing to logical groupings, combining elements that have direct impact on one-another. We are also requiring entire systems/processes be included in a single phase. For example, for plan review purposes we will now require that all of the demolition and hazardous materials abatement for a given project be submitted at one time. (You can still let it out to bid and/or establish project sequencing as deemed necessary for any approved work, but for plan review it is one phase.) Likewise, Final Site Work/Structural/Architectural/Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing are all now required to be submitted for plan review simultaneously due to these elements all having direct impact upon each other. (Again, bidding and sequencing are variables to be decided at the local level.)

The reasons for these procedural modifications include:

- Over the past year, the Bureau of School Facilities plan review staff has been reduced by 33 percent, so that we now have only two reviewers, resulting in less time available for PCT meetings, plan reviews, phone consultations, etc.
- Whereas we used to see 2 or 3 phases in a major project, districts and design professionals are now submitting phasing letters indicating 5, 6, and 7 phases for individual projects. Phasing such as this dramatically increases our total review time required for the entire project.
- Our reviews are now taking longer because architectural firms have also reduced their staff. As such, it appears that plans now being submitted for our review have not been reviewed as comprehensively as in the past. In many cases, we are finding numerous items in conflict with the codes. The additional time needed to review such plans, combined with reduced staff, is significantly slowing our plan review completion rate. In order to better serve school districts in approving plans in a timely manner, we need to modify what is and what is not acceptable for our review.
- When a major project is designed in too many phases, it is difficult to comprehend how the earlier phases can be designed when the later phases, which haven't been designed, are dependent on the earlier designs. When the later phases are eventually submitted for our review, frequently there is a need for costly change orders to previously approved phase work - for redesign, altered material orders, and possibly rework of completed construction. This places school districts in a financial hardship considering the capped grant eligibility of change orders.
- More districts now want to 'fast-track' their projects. However, when trying to rush through projects, we see more incomplete design documents and/or partial phases that make little sense other than to hurry the project along, mostly at the cost of later change orders.
- The high performance requirements add to the issue requiring project design (not phases) be complete at each stage before continuing on to construction.